

# SPECTACULAR SYMBOLS

## CROP CIRCLES OF 2007

*This year's season featured an array of ingenious and original patterns, some exhibiting unusual design perspectives, as well as interesting surveillance stories and more speculation about the purpose of this enduring phenomenon.*

by Andy Thomas © 2007

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Last year's UK crop circle season was perceived by some as disappointing. Despite several impressive glyphs, it was very late to start and there was a notable reduction in numbers compared with previous years. England remains the hub of global circular activity and mostly encapsulates the overall scene. As such, even other previously circle-blossoming countries seemed to be on a go-slow in 2006. The British media gleefully printed prematurely dark obituaries for the phenomenon.

With this in mind, 2007 was approached by some with trepidation that a downward slide would continue. They needn't have worried. This year the first formation arrived earlier than in many seasons before it, and as the months went by this enduring mystery produced many ambitious designs to match their forebears. Some hailed it as a renaissance year for the crop circles, the general perception of enthusiasts being that the phenomenon had undergone a major revival.

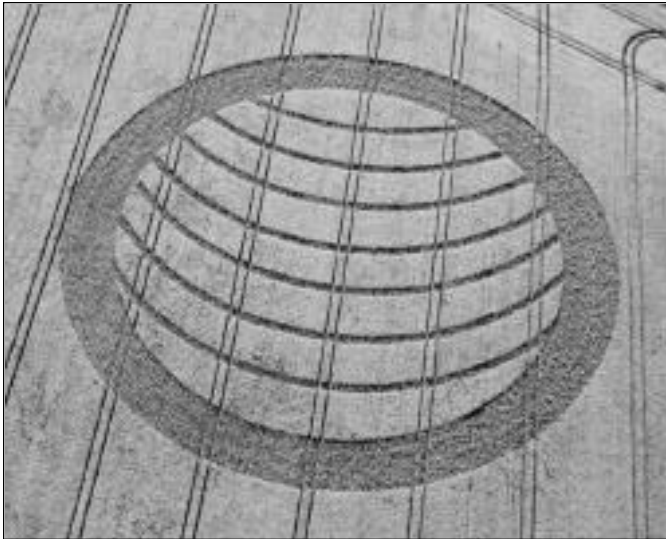
Interestingly, in truth, what we experienced in 2007 was a holding operation: there were almost exactly the same number of UK crop formations as in the previous year, with around 50 reported. The early start and a renewed concentration of activity in the Wiltshire heartlands (at the mysterious expense of suddenly circle-bereft counties like Sussex and Norfolk) perhaps gave a misleading impression of abundance. But neither was there a further reduction in overall numbers, and the ingenuity of some of the crop glyphs was undeniably dazzling. All this helped create a better feeling amongst circle-watchers than had been experienced for some time. Indeed, driving around the Avebury area of Wiltshire, seeing crop formations on virtually every horizon, felt like a throwback to so-called circular "golden ages" of yore.

It was certainly a surprise to receive the first event of the year as early as 15th April, near the Iron Age hill fort of Oliver's Castle, Wiltshire. A huge ring containing seven arches, it was not only one of the more complex openings to a season for some time, but also the largest circular design ever discovered in oilseed rape (canola)—an impressive and mystically teasing 333 feet in diameter (curiously, the width of the outer ring was 33 feet).

A healthy smattering of intricate and beautiful formations then peppered Wiltshire in April and May—remembering that 2006 didn't see the first "proper" design appear until June. This time, by early June, most of the traditional regions had already been targeted with advanced creations such as the bizarre pyramidal complex of shapes which appeared on 7th June below the white horse carving overlooking the famous Alton Barnes area.

The first Wiltshire formation to make national newsprint was the very unusual pictorial emblem found next to the ancient West Kennett long barrow on 28th June. Etched within a square of standing crop was a clear representation of a chequer-floored corridor with doors opening from it, designed with clever (if not entirely accurate) perspective. Described by some hopeful Egyptology buffs as a representation of an ancient temple or the alleged lost "Hall of Records" below the Giza plateau, and by others as having connections to da Vinci's *Last Supper* fresco, more bookish observers pointed out its similarity to an illustration from a modern edition of *Alice in Wonderland*. One way or another, it seemed we were being led "down the rabbit-hole".

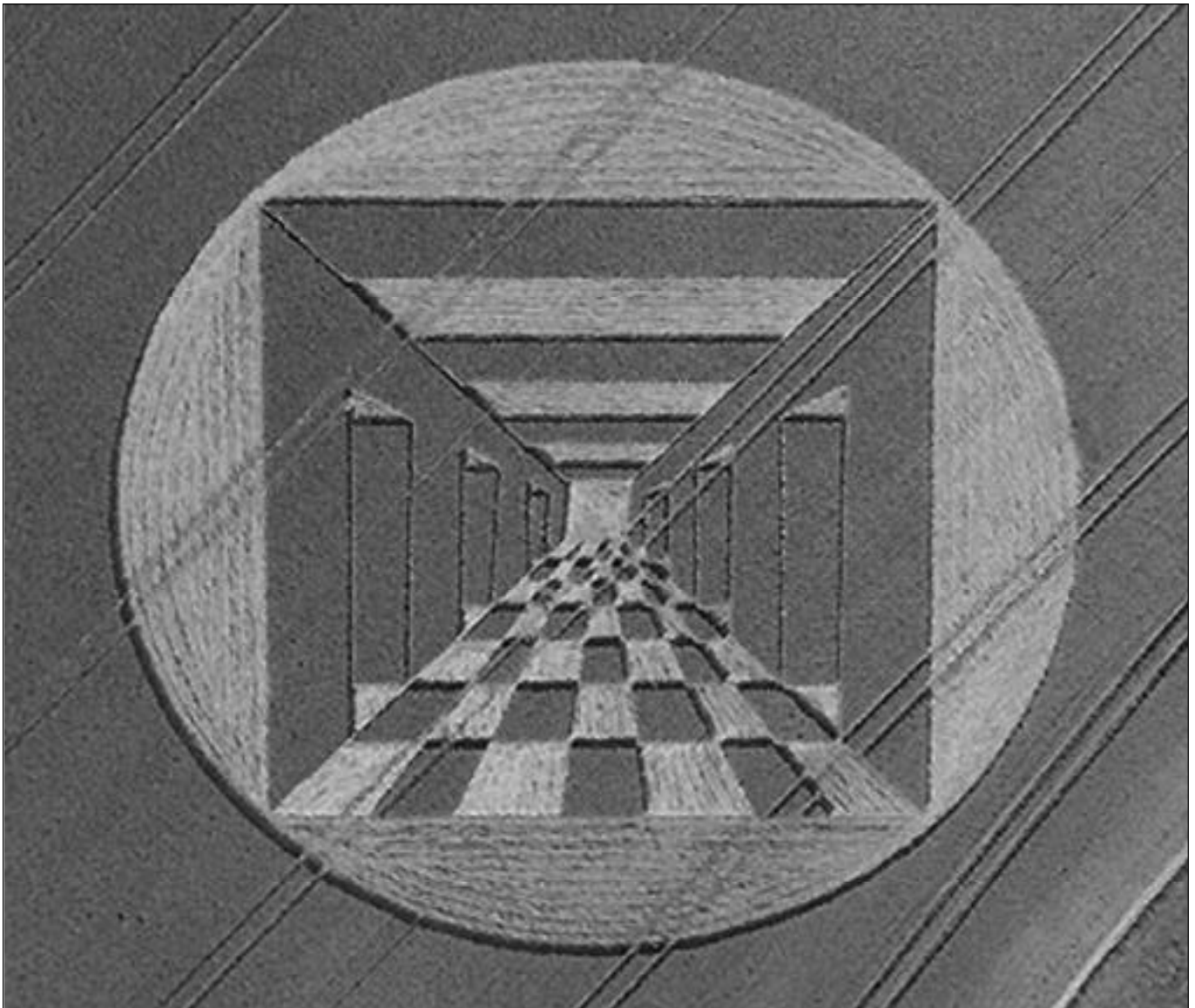
The most controversial event of the year occurred at Alton Barnes in the early hours of 7th July with the arrival of a huge array of expanding and diminishing circles forming arches across the acres known as East Field, a major circle-site of old. Not necessarily pleasing as a piece of design (though some speculated it might represent the holy *Aum* symbol), its scale, at 1,033 feet in total length, was more impressive. It was impossible to grasp its overall layout when standing within it. What distinguished this formation to make



Oliver's Castle, Wiltshire. Reported 15th April.  
Image: Lucy Pringle © 2007, [www.lucypringle.co.uk](http://www.lucypringle.co.uk)



White Horse Milk Hill, near Alton Barnes, Wiltshire. Reported 7th June.  
Image: Lucy Pringle © 2007, [www.lucypringle.co.uk](http://www.lucypringle.co.uk)



West Kennett long barrow, near Avebury, Wiltshire. Reported 28th June.  
Image: Steve Alexander © 2007, [www.temporarytemples.co.uk](http://www.temporarytemples.co.uk)

it one of the most discussed of 2007 was the presence of Gary King, Paula Presdee-Jones and UFO researcher Winston Keech, who claim to have been watching the field from nearby Knap Hill on the night of its arrival. All reported seeing a bright flash over the field at about 3.00 am. A video camera was running at this time, and on the tape the flash appears to show as a flicker of electronic interference.

Initial enhancement of footage taken that night appeared to show a blank field at 1.35 am, but by 3.20 am the glyph was visible. Given that some man-made crop formations have taken many hours to construct, if the times are accurate—though sceptics are trying to cast doubt on this—this leaves only a very brief time window in which such a design could have been manually constructed. Put together with the claim that nothing suggesting human activity was seen or heard by the observers that night, much was made of this evidence in the "croppie" world, with a local press conference being held and a DVD being rushed into circulation. However, in true crop circle confusion style, this did not stop assertions from supposed human circle-makers that *they* in fact had made the formation. Claims and counter-claims of intrigue and dark deeds continue to circulate, without resolution, at the time of writing. Cerealogical business as usual, then.

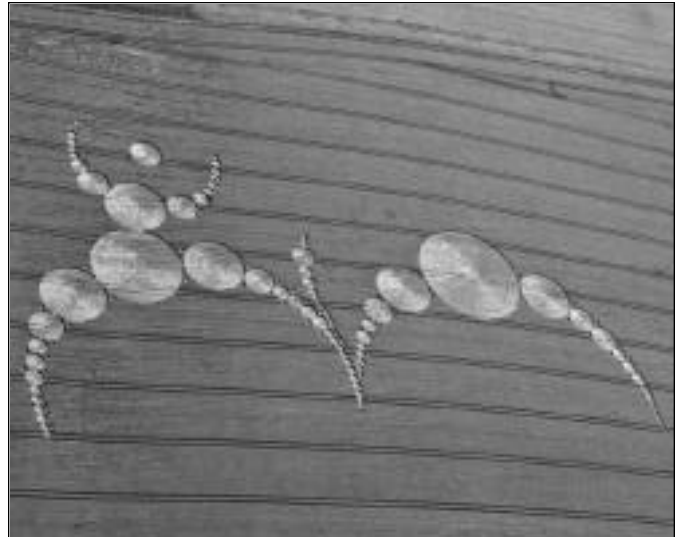
This same formation also seemed to attract several tales of military helicopters performing mysteriously low manoeuvres over the fields in the days after, and of strange men in white vans prowling around, but the more extreme stories remain largely unsubstantiated and low helicopters do not, in themselves, prove dubious purpose. Given that the Vale of Pewsey is a known military training area, such things are not entirely unusual, but others argue that this year's aerial activity was particularly—and oddly—intrusive.

As the summer progressed, some truly remarkable creations graced the fields: a very accurate *Yin-Yang* symbol at Marksbury in Somerset on 7th July (the same night as the East Field controversy) was one of the few complex formations outside of Wiltshire and Oxfordshire this year, while the latter county produced the most unusual emblem of the season in the shape of an ingenious, fragmented butterfly design at Ashbury on 16th July.

Of several ambitious and successful designs which appeared in the later part of the summer, two stand out in particular and seem linked in their themes. On 19th July, an extraordinary floral wheel was discovered at Martinsell Hill in Wiltshire, comprising four layers, each with 18 petals, the petals gradually widening from the centre with each layer. Its precision was stunning. On 1st August, a not-dissimilar but even more astounding wheel was found at Sugar Hill, near Aldbourne in Wiltshire. This time, four circular layers, with 36 perfect triangles each, surrounded 18 three-dimensional-looking cubes. This was considered by many to be the finest formation of the year, and a simple glance at images of it reminds us that whatever the origins of this amazingly persistent mystery—still argued over, after all these years—it should command our deepest respect.

Excited speculation on the Internet, courtesy of astronomical interpretations of this year's glyphs circulated in July and early August by a mysterious individual known as "Red Collie" (in fact, an Australian scientist who made several appearances at UK circle gatherings this summer), had suggested 18th August as a time when something spectacular might occur. However, after a few more complex designs in the first half of August, the 18th was apparently ignored and things soon went quiet, with one last formation to date (at the time of writing) tucking in at Hackpen Hill, Wiltshire, on 30th August in the shape of a Celtic cross design.

With researchers in a buoyant mood this summer (spoilt only by a



East Field, near Alton Barnes, Wiltshire. Reported 7th July.  
Image: Lucy Pringle © 2007, [www.lucypringle.co.uk](http://www.lucypringle.co.uk)



Marksbury, Somerset. Reported 7th July.  
Image: Steve Alexander © 2007, [www.temporarytemples.co.uk](http://www.temporarytemples.co.uk)



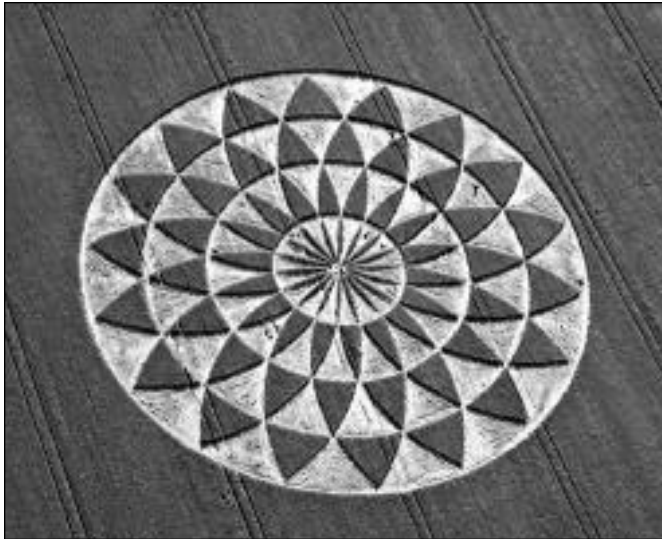
Hailey Wood, near Ashbury, Oxfordshire. Reported 16th July.  
Image: Lucy Pringle © 2007, [www.lucypringle.co.uk](http://www.lucypringle.co.uk)

number of militant farmers who insisted on cutting out formations within just a day or two of their arrival—an increasing problem), the impression was left that it had been a vintage year ambience-wise, if not statistically. Even the usually voracious British press, despite publishing one or two sniffy articles, seemed to go generally easy on the phenomenon this year, leaving those who retain their enthusiasm for the subject to go about their circular business relatively unflustered.

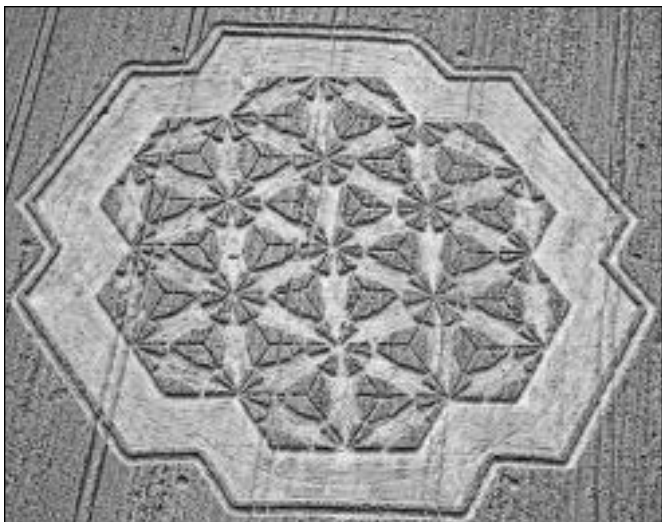
### Overseas themes

Meanwhile, there was an upward revival in the fortunes of crop circles elsewhere in the world. Germany, which also had a quiet year in 2006, came back to life in 2007 to produce 18 formations, several of which pursued impressively complex floral themes. Others struck up links with their English counterparts, such as the formation at Meensen in Lower Saxony on 23rd April, which seemed to be a reply to the 15th April opener at Oliver's Castle, Wiltshire, with another play on seven arcs within a ring in oilseed rape.

Italy continued its ascendancy into being England's closest rival in terms of numbers, with a substantial 22 formations, some of



Martinsell Hill, Wiltshire. Reported 19th July.  
Image: Lucy Pringle © 2007, www.lucypringle.co.uk



West Overton, near East Kennett, Wiltshire. Reported 17th August.  
Image: Lucy Pringle © 2007, www.lucypringle.co.uk

which would not be out of place in the English fields. The best example was the beautiful "Queen of Diamonds" formation which appeared on 10th June at Monteu da Po, Piemonte.

The Netherlands claimed fourth place in the number stakes with 13 events, and Belgium—an upcoming place for crop circles, it seems—came an unexpected fifth with 11 glyphs.

Other countries to report formations in 2007 included Canada, Croatia, the Czech Republic, France, Norway, Poland, Russia, Slovenia, Sweden and Switzerland.

### Speculations on the mystery

The question remains, of course, that if the 2007 season was indeed a "holding operation" for the crop circles, for what was it holding, and for whom? If the over-arching purpose of the phenomenon is to bring people together, to "raise consciousness" for some world-changing event just around the corner, as many believe (perhaps related to the much-discussed prophecies for the year 2012), could it be that it knows it has now reached the masses as much as it ever will do? After all, a quick viewing of circle website hit-rates reveals that with a whole planet of Net surfers, perhaps surprisingly only a very few thousand ever bother to check in to see the new wonders in the fields. Croppies often have an over-expanded view of their own world, which, in actuality, remains a small one. But small worlds often give birth to big things...

While significant mass-media coverage of curiosities like crop circles has largely moved on, replaced by a kind of background-level scepticism which makes media heroes of atheistic intellectuals like Richard Dawkins while reserving the "paranormal" for cheap entertainment, something about this strange phenomenon still refuses to die. The popular perception seems to be that the crop glyphs are simply the dying remains of an art terrorism fad that enjoys a little encore here and there—but some look at the evidence and refuse to believe that such an answer can explain all the wonders that still insist on occurring.

Does the ever-elusive source behind the crop circle mystery keep a few new shapes going down here and there just to keep the ball rolling for those latecomers who might yet get sucked in, hovered up, as it were, to join the small but significant minority of people who seem to be preparing for some kind of global change? Or are the shapes nothing more than some telepathically projected manifestation of our own consciousness, as some have speculated, which will peter out at the start of our next big psychic development, whatever that may be? Or is something *really* huge just around the corner in our fields which will bring crop circles back to big public awareness...?

On, then, to 2008, and probably more of the same for now...but if all the phenomenon does is "hold", for many that will be enough.

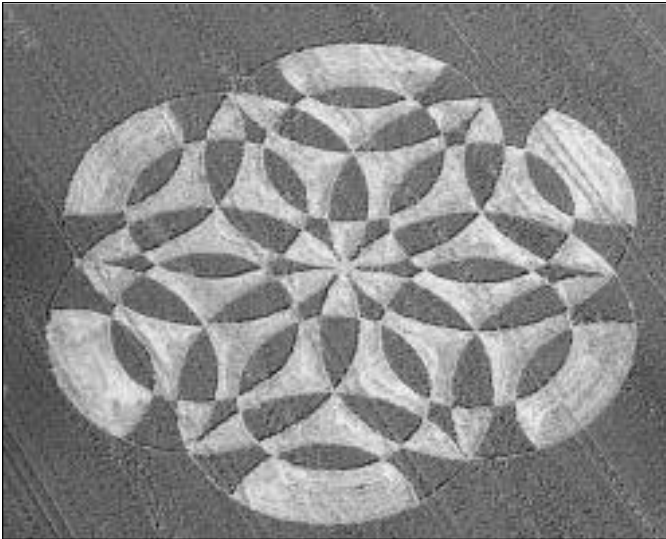
### About the Author:

Andy Thomas is one the world's leading crop circle researchers and is the author of five books on the phenomenon including *Vital Signs*, considered by many to be the definitive guide (see <http://www.vitalsignspublishing.co.uk>). He can be contacted by email at [info@swirlednews.com](mailto:info@swirlednews.com).

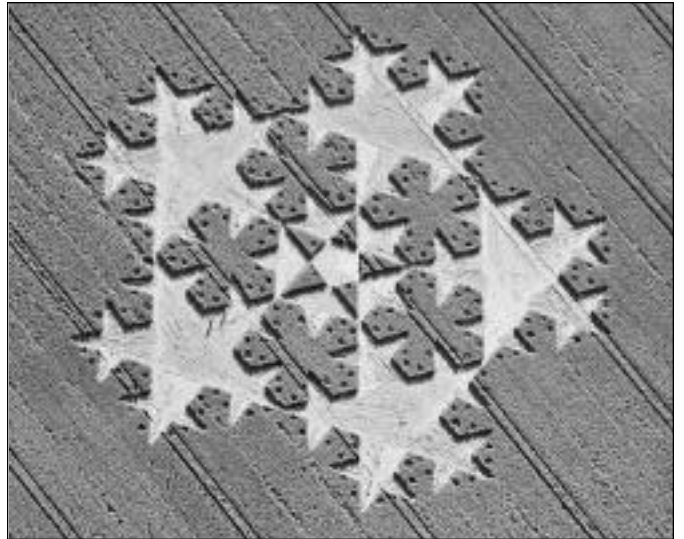
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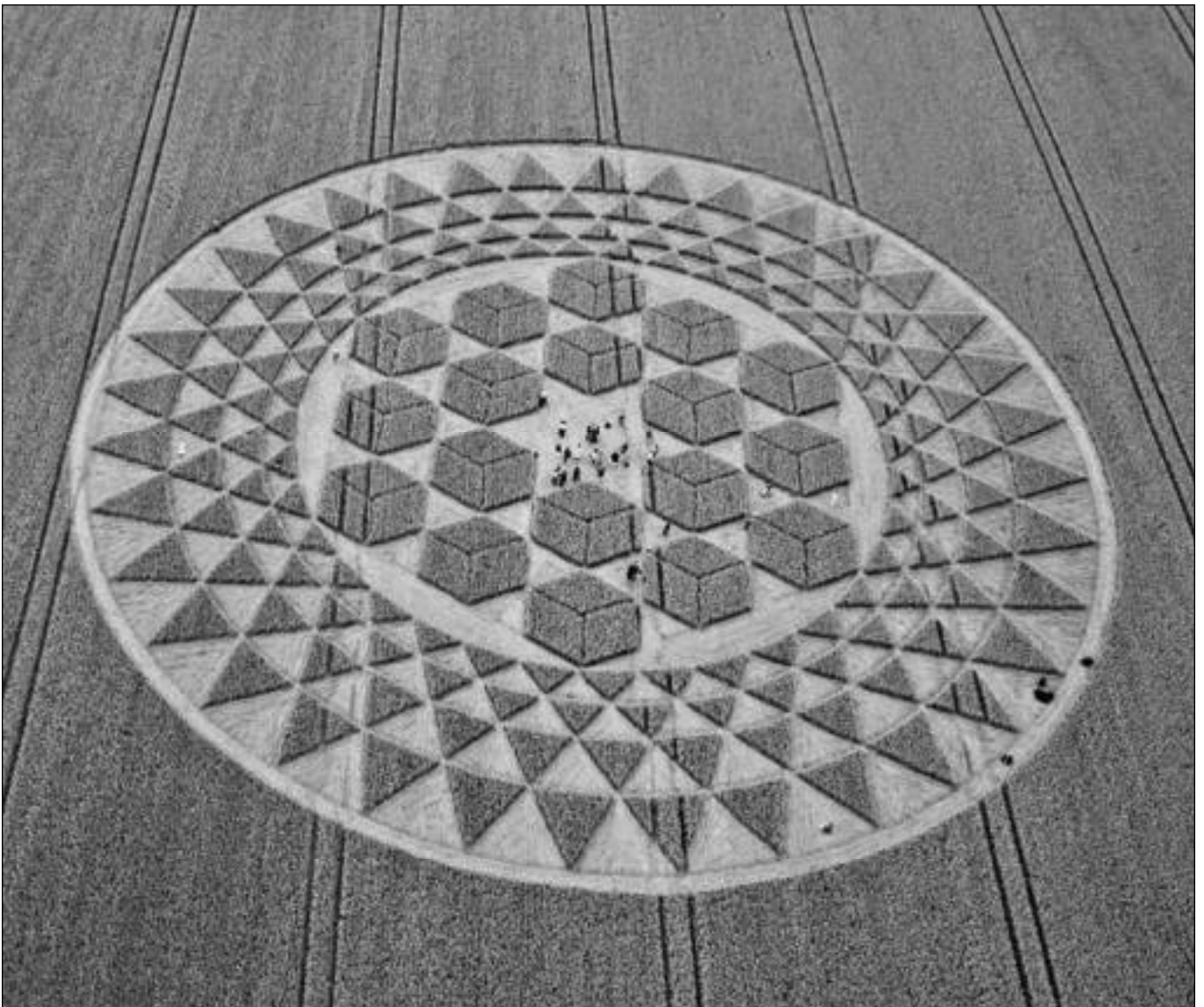




Clifford's Hill, near All Cannings, Wiltshire. Reported 19th July.  
Image: John Montgomery © 2007



Chute Causeway, near Mount Cowdown, Wiltshire. Reported 26th July. Image: Lucy Pringle © 2007, [www.lucypringle.co.uk](http://www.lucypringle.co.uk)



Sugar Hill, near Aldbourne, Wiltshire. Reported 1st August. Image: Lucy Pringle © 2007, [www.lucypringle.co.uk](http://www.lucypringle.co.uk)